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MEMORANDUM

TO: DIRECTORS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION
EARLY CHILDHOOD ADMINISTRATORS

FROM: HANK BINDER, FEDERAL PROJECTS OFFICER
SHERON COCHRAN, EDUCATION CONSULTANT

RE: EARLY CHILDHOOD LRE SETTINGS FOR DECEMBER 1 CHILD COUNT

DATE: NOVEMBER 20, 2003

The Division continues to receive questions on the use of Early Childhood Program Types for 3, 4 and 5 year old children. This memo is written to review the Early Childhood Program Types and provide the requested clarification in preparation for the December 1, 2003 Child Count. The early childhood program types are to be used for children ages 3, 4, and 5. Five-year-old children in kindergarten should be reported according to the early childhood settings definitions rather than school-age program definitions. In addition, funding is not tied to the program types (settings). This memo reiterates the following points for clarification:

- 3,4, and 5 year-old children by December 1 are to be reported in one of the Early Childhood Program Type codes (codes 20-25). CODA does not accept school-age program codes (codes 50-58) for these children. The definitions for Early Childhood Program Types apply to all of the 3,4 & 5 year-old children including five-year-old children (5B) in kindergarten who are reported in the "ELEMENTARY PROGRAM LEVEL."
- Early Childhood Special Education is one of the LRE placement settings. Eligible children with disabilities, ages 3,4 and 5, receive special education, however, these children do not necessarily receive all their services in an early childhood special education setting. If a child is receiving early childhood special education, it does not necessarily mean that all services are provided in a special education setting (code 21).
- Funding for preschool children and school-age children is not tied to the program type. State funding for preschool children is generated by the child's age (age 3 but not more than 5 years of age and not eligible under state statute to be enrolled in kindergarten).

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM TYPES: 3,4, & 5 YEAR OLDS

The Program Type refers to the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) settings. School-Age LRE Program Types (ages 6-21) are different from Early Childhood LRE Program Types (ages 3-5). One of the federal reports that Indiana must submit to OSEP is entitled "Number of children Ages 3-5 Served in Different Educational Environments under IDEA, Part B...All Disabilities." The codes for early childhood (20 through 25) do not make a distinction for preschool children and five-year-old children on December 1 that are in kindergarten. The Early Childhood Program Types are used for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten children who are 5 by December 1. A six-year-old student in kindergarten or in an early childhood special education setting (pre-kindergarten) must be reported under a school-age category.

In the CODA system, there is a difference in Program Level and Program Type. For reporting purposes, three, four, and five-year-old children have both a Program Level and Program Type. This distinction is necessary for both reporting and funding purposes. Five-year-old children are reported differently in these two categories. Program Level 02 is “Early Childhood Education” for children who are 3, 4, and 5 after July 1 (5A). Children who are five prior to July 1 are classified in Program Level 03 “Elementary” (age 5B). Children who are five prior to July 1 are in the “Elementary Program Level” and they are reported in an “Early Childhood Program Type.”

EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION IS ONE OF THE LRE SETTINGS

The authority for the LRE settings for school-age children and for early childhood is in IDEA 97 and is reflected in Article 7. The definitions for School-Age LRE setting are very different from Early Childhood LRE settings. For example, Regular class (LRE type 50) includes students with disabilities who receive special education and related **outside the regular classroom for less than 21% of the school day.** The Regular Class (LRE type 50) definition is not the same as the Early Childhood (LRE Type 20) definition. The Early Childhood setting definition includes students 3,4, and 5 who receive all their special education and related services in educational programs designed primarily for children without disabilities. In contrast, the definition for Regular Class Setting (50) includes receiving some special education. When a 5-year-old child with communication disorder is receives special education in the regular kindergarten class with speech therapy provided by the speech-language pathologist outside of the regular class, this is considered Part-Time Early Childhood/Part-Time Early Childhood Special Education (LRE type 23) rather than Early Childhood or Early Childhood Special Education.

There is concern that 5B children (birthdays prior to July 1) who are in the elementary program level (03) are being reported under the Early Childhood Program Type which most closely approximates the definition of a “Regular Class” Setting rather than according to the definitions for Early Childhood Settings. The Early Childhood Program types do not include percentages of time in settings. Also, in the past, some districts reported all children in LRE code 21 because the children were eligible for early childhood special education without regard for the LRE placement settings.

REPORTS FOR FUNDING AND FEDERAL PROGRAM DATA PURPOSES

Some confusion results from the way 5-year -old children are reported for funding versus how they are reported for December 1 federal program purposes. Early Childhood funding is determined by the state cut-off date for kindergarten eligibility (five prior to July 1) irrespective of program arrangements. The placement setting does not factor into the funding formulas. Three, four, and five year old children who turn five after July 1 are counted as “preschool students” for purposes of generating \$2,750. Children who turn five prior to July 1 are counted as “school-age students” for funding purposes. State special education funding for school-age children (ages 5B, 6-21) is a formula based on categories of disabilities (severe disabilities, mild/moderate disabilities, and communication disordered) and homebound.

EXAMPLES OF PROGRAM TYPES (LRE SETTINGS) FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AGES 3-5

Early Childhood Setting (LRE type 20). Unduplicated total of children with disabilities who received all of their special education and related services in educational programs designed primarily for children **without** disabilities. No education or related services are provided in separate special education settings:

Examples: Child receives all special education and/or related services in a class designed primarily for children without disabilities such as in a Head Start class, community-based preschool class, pre-kindergarten class in public school, Even Start class, or kindergarten class; the itinerant early childhood special education teacher from the public school provides special instruction to the student in the class and/or consults with the classroom teacher and monitors IEP implementation; the child receives speech therapy or related services in the classroom; or, occupational therapy,

speech, or physical therapy goals/objectives are carried out by the early childhood classroom teacher in consultation with the therapist.

Early Childhood Special Education Setting (LRE type 21). Unduplicated total who received all of their special education and related services in educational programs designed primarily for children **with** disabilities housed in regular school buildings or other community-based settings. No special education and related services are provided in early childhood settings.

Examples: Child receives special education in an early childhood special education classroom in an elementary building; the child is in a special education class with 2 or 3 children without disabilities in the class (reverse mainstreaming) serving as typical peers and the class is organized primarily for the purpose of providing special education; the child is in a class with other children with communication disorder designed for group speech work; the child is in a special education class for children with disabilities in a community-based preschool program; the preschool child with communication disorder only receives speech therapy in an elementary building; or, the child receives special education services while in the hospital. If speech/language therapy is the only special education a child receives (no special education in the kindergarten class, the Head Start Class, the community preschool class), the child is reported in the early childhood special education setting.

Home (LRE type 22). Unduplicated total who receive all of their special education and related services in the principal residence of the child's family or caregivers.

Examples: If the special education teacher and/or provider of related services go to the child's home, or, if the special education teacher and/or related service provider go to the child care home provider to serve the child.

Part-Time Early Childhood/Part-Time Early Childhood Special Education Setting (LRE type 23). Unduplicated total who receive services in multiple settings, such that (1) general and/or special education and related services are provided at home or in educational programs designed primarily for children **without** disabilities, and (2) special education and related services are provided in programs designed primarily for children **with** disabilities.

Examples: The child receives special education in kindergarten class with speech therapy or related services provided outside of the kindergarten class; the child receives special education services at home and goes to the school to receive special education or a related service; the child receives special education in the Head Start class and is transported to the school for speech therapy or related services; the child is in a community-based preschool program with speech therapy or a related services provided outside of the class/in elementary building; or, the child receives special education in a community-based preschool part-time and attends an early childhood special education class part-time.

Residential Facility (LRE type 24). Unduplicated total who receive all of their special education and related services in publicly or privately operated residential schools or in residential medical facilities on an inpatient basis.

Examples: the child receives special education and/or related services at the School for the Blind, School for the Deaf, or Silvercrest (The student is counted as attending a residential facility even though the child may not be a residential student).

Separate School (LRE type 25). Unduplicated total who received all of their special education and related services in public or private day schools specifically for children with disabilities.

Examples: A child who attends a day school such as Louisville Deaf Oral School; a child in an early childhood special education class located in a separate school for children with disabilities.

In summary, children ages 3-5 should be reported according to the environment (s) in which they receive special education and related services. Should you have any questions, please contact Sheron Cochran or Hank Binder.